



Lambda Letters Project

32570

Vol. 3, No. 5

May, 1995

6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, California 95608

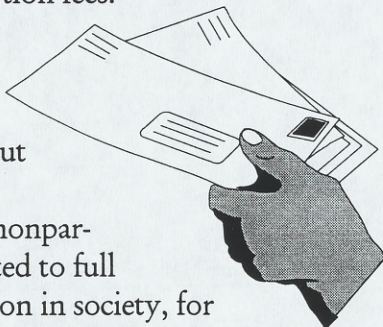
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100,000 Letters and Counting!

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Last month, with the help of you and all our wonderful friends and members, we reached an absolutely marvelous milestone. The Lambda Letters Project has delivered *over 100,000 letters* since its founding to legislators and other public officials and leaders in industry. It is particularly satisfying to note that we did it without any paid employees or requiring anyone to pay a single penny in dues or subscription fees.

Lambda Letters was founded in 1988 as a committee of the River City Democratic Club. But by the spring of 1989 it became an independent, nonpartisan organization dedicated to full rights, and full participation in society, for women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and people living with HIV/AIDS. Early in 1994 we added the concerns of people of color to our agenda. For five years Lambda Letters has communicated with its members strictly by mail. Starting this year, however, we have begun sending legislative alerts via Internet e-mail, which is adding significantly to our impact on legislation.



Continued on page 9

Congress Takes the Pledge!

According to the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF), a majority of the members of the current Congress have established nondiscrimination policies in their congressional offices, providing equal protections to lesbian, gay, and bisexual employees and job applicants. Currently, however, no federal law protects people from being fired, refused work, or otherwise discriminated against *merely* for being lesbian, gay, or bisexual. The HRCF asked members of Congress to include lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in their nondiscrimination policies after members of the Oklahoma delegation declared in 1993 that they would not employ qualified people whom they knew to be gay.

According to the HRCF, 223 Representatives and 64 Senators of the current Congress have confirmed in writing that the sexual orientation of an individual is not a consideration in the hiring, promotion, or termination of an employee in their offices. In the House 62 Republicans have taken the pledge (up from 58 last year), while in the Senate 24 Republicans have done so (the same number as last year).

Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein have agreed not to discriminate. In the California delegation

Continued on page 5

Also in This Issue:

Compassionate Health Care	3, 4
Supporting Nondiscrimination at Work	4
Two Gay rights Bills Defeated	6
Another Gay Rights Bill Stalled	6
Uncontaminated Water for All	7
Child Custody and Domestic Violence	7
Preparing for the Issue of Marriage	8

Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters Collected

April, 1995	2,355 letters
This year	6,850 letters

Dollars Spent

April, 1995	\$1,288
This year	\$5,575

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Statement of Purpose

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

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mamurphy@igc.apc.org

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J.P. Rasmussen, San Diego, (619) 543-0059

Shawn Todd, San Diego, (619) 291-2371

Staff

Administrator: Boyce Hinman, (916) 965-6851, boyceh1021@aol.com

Newsletter Editor: Stefan Grünwedel, (916) 632-4457,
sgprima@aol.com

Legislative Analyst, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Issues: Vacant

Legislative Analyst, HIV/AIDS Status Issues: Joe Heller,
(916) 454-0411, jrheller@csus.edu

Legislative Analyst, People of Color Issues: Denise Okamoto,
(916) 441-6785

Legislative Analyst, Women's Issues: Catherine Borger,
(510) 528-3582, cborger@uclink3.berkeley.edu

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(*Actual cost to LLP for you to receive 44 letters in one year.)

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Send payment and your camera-ready copy,
along with your name and phone number, to:

Lambda Letters Project

6212 Silvertown Way

Carmichael, CA 95608

Deadline is the 25th of each month.

Compassionate Health Care for All Women

This month, we ask you to write to the Governor and leaders of the State Senate and Assembly and ask them to include money in the state budget to provide prenatal health care for impoverished, undocumented pregnant women. Your sample letter shows whom we would like you to write to.

A bill prohibiting public funding of such care (A.B. 326 by Assemblymember David Knowles, R-Cameron Park) was defeated in the Assembly Health Committee last month. Lambda Letters' Administrator Boyce Hinman sent letters to all committee members on behalf of LLP, urging them to defeat the bill. However, the Governor seeks to accomplish the same thing as the defeated A.B. 326 by eliminating funding for prenatal care for poor, undocumented pregnant women from the budget he sent to the legislature earlier this year.

Everyone benefits when prenatal care is provided to poor, undocumented mothers. For example, every \$1 spent on prenatal care saves \$3 in a baby's first year of life by reducing the likelihood of the need for expensive hospitalization and remedial care later on. Eliminating these prenatal services could cost Californians \$120 million a year, not save money.

Eliminating payment for prenatal care for pregnant, undocumented poor women would not eliminate their need for care, it would simply prevent community clinics and other medical providers who serve them from receiving state reimbursement. This would impose an impossible burden on community clinics, county facilities, and other providers.

Without state reimbursement, undocumented women would be directed to already overburdened county service agencies. Regardless of a woman's immigration status, federal and state laws prohibit doctors and hospitals from turning away women in labor; without reimbursement they would have to turn away other poor women, thus reducing care for the whole community.

The bottom line is that if undocumented poor women don't get adequate prenatal care innocent

Continued on page 4

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Support This Year's Employment Non-Discrimination Act

This month we ask you to write to your member of the House of Representatives asking him or her to cosponsor this year's version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). This bill will probably be introduced sometime in May. As soon as it is, it will be given a bill number.

At present the bill's backers are looking for key Representatives to be the bill's primary sponsors. They particularly hope to find a Republican to serve as one of its key sponsors.

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act would prohibit discrimination in employment based on sexual orientation. Currently, federal law prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, age, and disability. Sexual orientation would be added to that list and, as a result, lesbians, gays, and bisexuals would have the same protections, no more and no less, than all other Americans. ENDA would prohibit employers, employment agencies, and labor unions from considering sexual orientation as the basis for employment decisions such as hiring, firing, promotion, or compensation.

The bill exempts small businesses with fewer than 15 employees, as do existing civil rights laws. It also exempts religious organizations and it prohibits preferential treatment, including quotas, based on sexual orientation. ENDA provides for the same remedies (injunctive relief and damages) as permitted under Title VII of the Americans with Disabilities Act and it applies to Congress as well as private employers.

In the 1994 elections the voters demonstrated that they do not oppose employment protections for lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. In spite of the conservative sweep, all U.S. Senators who supported last year's version of ENDA were reelected and 110 of 120 of last year's supporters in the House of Representatives were reelected.

Other evidence shows that Americans do support employment protections for lesbians,

Health Care for All Women

Continued from page 3

children are going to die. Many of those who survive will be born prematurely, have birth defects or be retarded, or will suffer lifelong health problems. AIDS is increasing at an alarming rate among women of color. If left untreated among pregnant women, HIV is often passed on to their children. However, it has been found that if the mother is treated for AIDS during her pregnancy, it greatly reduces the chance that her child will be born with AIDS.

If you have doubts about the merits of paying for the prenatal care of undocumented poor women, please imagine yourself in the shoes of these children. If you were them, would you oppose health care for your mother? Have these children done anything to merit such suffering?

Please send us your letters in support of funding for prenatal care for poor, undocumented women.

gays, and bisexuals. For example, a 1994 *Newsweek* poll indicated that "74 percent of all Americans favor protecting gays from job discrimination." Very few elected officials can match that plurality in their election statistics. A poll sponsored by the Human Rights Campaign Fund on November 8, 1994, showed strong bipartisan support for equal employment protections, including 64 percent of Republicans, 77 percent of Democrats, and 71 percent of independents polled.

Job discrimination against lesbians, gays, and bisexuals clearly exists. It will not end until it is prohibited by law. So it is very important for us to support the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. Please write to your member of Congress in support of this bill.

(209) 299-1464

Wild West Sandwich House

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Table 1. House Membership Stance on Non-Discrimination Pledge

Name	Party	Vote
Bill Baker	R	N
Xavier Becerra	D	Y
Anthony Beilenson	D	Y
Howard Berman	D	Y
Brian Bilbray	R	Y
Sonny Bono	R	N
George Brown	D	Y
Ken Calvert	R	N
Gary Condit	D	Y
Christopher Cox	R	N
Randy Cunningham	R	Y
Ronald Dellums	D	Y
Julian Dixon	D	Y
Calvin Dooley	D	Y
John Doolittle	R	N
Robert Dornan	R	N
David Dreier	R	N
Anna Eshoo	D	Y
Sam Farr	D	Y
Vic Fazio	D	Y
Bob Filner	D	Y
Elton Gallegly	R	N
Jane Harman	D	Y
Wally Herger	R	N
Steve Horn	R	Y
Duncan Hunter	R	N
Jay Kim	R	N
Tom Lantos	D	Y
Jerry Lewis	R	Y
Zoe Lofgren	D	Y
Mathew Martinez	D	Y
Robert Matsui	D	Y
Howard McKeon	R	N
George Miller	D	Y

Congress Takes the Pledge

Continued from page 1

to the House of Representatives, 6 Republicans and all 27 Democrats took the pledge—over 63 percent of our delegation!

Table 1 here lists the members of the California delegation to the House of Representatives and indicates who has or has not agreed not to discriminate. (Interestingly enough, Representative Sonny Bono has not yet agreed not to discriminate, even though his daughter, Chastity Bono, recently came out as lesbian in *The Advocate*.)

This month we are asking you to write to the House of Representatives in support of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Your sample letter is addressed to your member of the House of Representatives. By comparing the table and the letter, you can determine whether or not your Representative has taken the pledge. We hope you'll *add a P.S. to your letter* thanking your Representative for taking the pledge—or urging him or her to do so.

Table 1. House Members Pledge (cont.)

Name	Party	Vote
Norman Mineta	D	Y
Carlos Moorhead	R	N
Ron Packard	R	N
Nancy Pelosi	D	Y
Richard Pombo	R	N
George P. Radanovich	R	N
Frank Riggs	R	Y
Dana Rohrabacher	R	N
Lucille Roybal-Allard	D	Y
Edward Royce	R	N
Andrea Seastrand	R	N
Fortney Stark	D	Y
Bill Thomas	R	Y
Esteban Torres	D	Y
Walter Tucker	D	Y
Maxine Waters	D	Y
Henry Waxman	D	Y
Lynn Woolsey	D	Y

Two Gay Rights Bills Defeated . . .

Recently two gay rights bills were defeated in the State Legislature in disappointing committee votes.

A.B. 627

The first bill, A.B. 627 (Katz, D-Panorama City), would have permitted statewide registration of domestic partnerships. It failed in the Assembly Judiciary Committee on March 29th on a straight party-line vote. Seven Democrats voted for the bill and seven Republicans voted against it. The committee members and how they voted are as follows:

Voting for the bill (all Democrats): Marguerite Archie-Hudson, Phil Isenberg, Liz Figueroa, Wally Knox, Sheila Kuehl, Kevin Murray, and Byron Sher.

Voting against the bill (all Republicans): Barbara Alby, Jim Battin, George House, Howard Kaloogian, William Knight, David Knowles, and Bill Morrow.

Failing to get a majority, the bill died in committee. Last year, the same bill was approved by both houses of the State Legislature, but was vetoed by the Governor.

S.B. 1159

The second bill, S.B. 1159 (Hayden, D-Los Angeles), would have permitted the state government, and local governments that are part of the Public Employee's Retirement System, to offer health insurance to the domestic partners of their employees. This bill was defeated in the Senate Public Employment and Retirement Committee. In this case, the vote was not strictly along party lines. Jim Costa (D-Fresno) voted against the bill.

Lambda Letters had made a special effort to gain Senator Costa's support by calling many of his members who live in his district and urging them to call his office. In favor of the bill were Teresa Hughes (D) and Hilda L. Solis (D). Opposed were Jim Costa (D), Don Rogers (R), and Newton Russell (R).

Initially, a similar bill made it through both houses of the State Legislature last year, but failed in the Senate when it came back to that house for approval of amendments to the bill.

. . . And Another One Stalled After Initial Victory

Sheila James Kuehl (D-Encino), the first openly lesbian member of the State Legislature, has introduced A.B. 1001 which would add sexual orientation to the State Education Code. This bill would require that the administration of each school or campus ensure that programs and activities are free from discrimination based on sexual orientation.

On April 4th the bill was approved, in a real cliff-hanger fashion, by the Assembly Higher Education Committee. All the Democrats plus one Republican, Bruce McPherson, voted for the bill and all remaining Republicans voted against the bill. At first Assemblymember McPherson agreed to vote for the bill but changed his mind by April 4th. Your letters, plus a phone-calling campaign (not organized by us) persuaded him to vote for the bill. The vote occurred at midnight on April 4th. In favor of the bill were Marguerite Archie-Hudson (D), Joe Baca (D), Louis Caldera (D), Wally Knox (D), Bruce McPherson (R), and John Vasconcellos (D). Opposed were Tom Bordonaro (R), Mickey Conroy (R), Brooks Firestone (R), and Brian Setencich (R).

Unfortunately the bill was not approved in a vote in the Assembly Education Committee on April 18th, and the report on how committee members voted was not available at the time this article was being prepared. Assemblymember Kuehl plans to make A.B. 1001 a two-year bill, which means she will try to get it passed next year.

Clearly, we need to increase the effectiveness of efforts like those of Lambda Letters Project to make sure that our legislators get the message to pass good legislation like A.B. 1001.



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Making Water Clean for All

This month we are writing to the Assembly Appropriations Committee and asking them to pass A.B. 590 (Knox, D-Los Angeles). This bill would require Medi-Cal to cover bottled water and certain filters as benefits upon finding cryptosporidium in treated water.

Cryptosporidium is a parasite which causes severe intestinal illness and can lead to death when it infects people with compromised immune systems, such as people living with AIDS or cancer patients on chemotherapy.

There are plenty of data to indicate that the water supply in many parts of the country and this state is contaminated with cryptosporidium (and other things). This is a debilitating parasite, whose elimination is preventable with little cost. A.B. 590 would aid in these prevention efforts.

To update you on last month's efforts: Last month we sent letters urging defeat of H.R. 1289 (Ackerman, D-NY), which would remove the anonymity of HIV testing of newborn infants. While we do not have information on the current status of that bill, we are happy to report that a parallel bill by State Senator Tim Leslie (R-Roseville) failed to pass in committee.



In Sacramento County

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BEA BETZNER, M.A., M.F.C.C
Psychotherapist
MFC 30303

Quality Service For
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Bestowing Child Custody with Regard to Domestic Violence

This month's letter focuses on awards of child custody to perpetrators of domestic violence. Current California law requires mothers to prove that custody by a batterer would be detrimental to their children. A.B. 800, introduced by Assemblymember Sheila Kuehl (D-Encino), would reverse this presumption by placing the burden of proof back onto the perpetrators.

All too often during divorce proceedings, the battering husband is left "holding all the cards"—the financial resources, the more expensive attorney, etc.—while the mother, in an effort to gain full and permanent access to her children, is left intimidated and ill-prepared to confront the well-orchestrated legal show that ensues.

Many parents who abuse their spouses or partners also abuse their children. For example, researchers estimate that there is a 30-40 percent overlap between spousal abuse and child abuse. Girls are especially at risk—they are five to six times more likely to be sexually abused by battering fathers than nonbattering ones. These effects have led the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges to state that awards of shared custody to perpetrators of domestic violence have the most adverse consequences for children of any custody option because it places the children at such high risk.

A.B. 800 is scheduled to be heard in the Committee on the Judiciary in May. Please sign this month's letter urging committee members to support this long-overdue bill. Mothers should never be forced to prove that placing their children in the care of a batterer is dangerous—the courts should already recognize this to be true.



The Marriage Option: We Must Prepare

A case is now winding its way through the state courts of Hawaii that will probably end in the Hawaiian Supreme Court, declaring that same-sex marriages must be allowed in that state. Last year the state Supreme Court ruled that a ban on same-sex marriage probably violates the Hawaiian constitution. It sent the case back to the lower courts to decide some minor issues, but it appears that a final decision in favor of same-sex marriages may occur later this year.

Under present California law, our state would have to honor same-sex marriages obtained legally in Hawaii. California's courts have repeatedly ruled that any marriage that occurs legally in another state must be treated as valid in California, even if such a marriage would not be legal in this state. For example, there have been cases where young people went to another state to marry because they were too young to marry legally here, but not too young in the other state. Later, one of the parties sued, in California, to have the marriage annulled on the grounds that they were too young to marry under California law. The courts ruled that if they were

of legal age to marry in the state in which the marriage occurred, then California must recognize the marriage and cannot annul it.

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, there are many practical reasons why it would benefit lesbians, gays, and bisexuals to gain the right to marry the person of their choice. However, if the Hawaii Supreme Court does rule in our favor, you can expect attempts to block same-sex marriage in other states. In March, Utah's Legislature overwhelmingly passed legislation to ban same-sex marriages and a similar bill failed by only one vote in the South Dakota State Legislature.

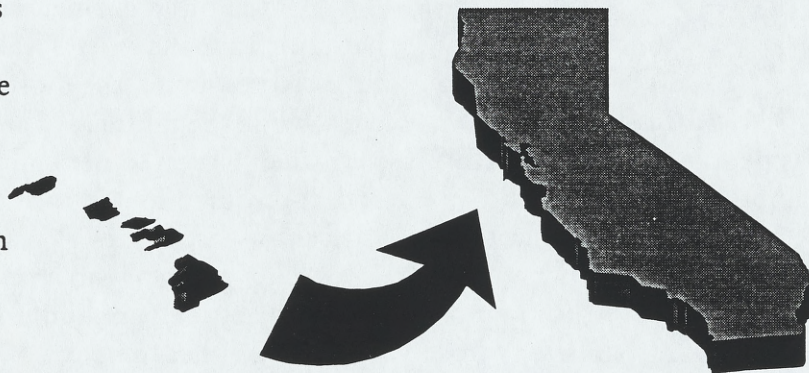
Legal authorities tell us that recognition of same-sex marriages could be denied in California by passing legislation specifically stating that only

marriages legal under California law may be recognized in this state.

It is very important that we prepare for the onslaught in the coming months. For that reason, we have attached a set of

postcards supporting same-sex marriage to the front of this newsletter. Please make as many photocopies of these postcards as you like. Sign a set of them yourself and ask your friends to sign the other copies. Then send the signed copies to us. Please do ask people to add their return addresses below their

Continued on page 9



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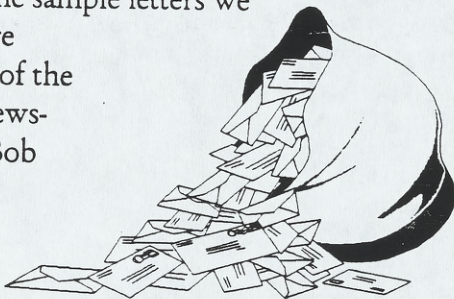
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100,000 and Growing!

Continued from page 1

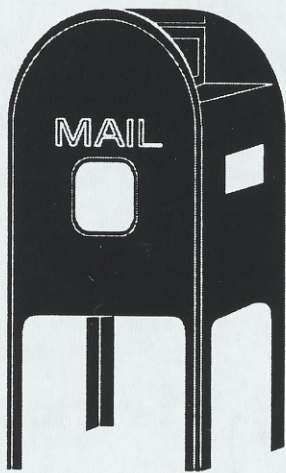
At first LLP was essentially a local Sacramento organization, whose members came from that area. Now it is becoming a truly statewide organization, with members now in 39 of California's 58 counties. Fully two-thirds of its membership now live outside the Sacramento area. Our Board of Directors includes people from as far away as San Diego and Eureka, as well as from Sacramento.

We have always set a high standard for the research we do and the sample letters we produce, and we are particularly proud of the Lambda Letters Newsletter founded by Bob Maxie and now edited by Stefan Grünwedel.



So now we begin the second 100,000 letters! We hope we will gather them in much less time than the six and a half years it took to collect the first 100,000. To accomplish this end we need to do several things:

- ♦ Increase our membership. Please tell your friends about us and encourage them to join us.
- ♦ Gather signatures on letters at public events and meetings of women's groups, lesbian/gay/bisexual groups, AIDS-support groups, and groups for people of color. If you attend such meetings and would be willing to bring sample letters for signature to them, let us know. We will supply you with multiple copies of letters and postage both ways.
- ♦ Increase our revenues to pay for expansion of the Project. You, our members, have been extremely generous and we are very grateful for your support. Recently, we have experimented quite successfully with fund-raising letters to other mailing lists. Do you have access to a mailing list that we could use for fund-raising appeals? If so, please contact us.
- ♦ Connect with those on the Internet. If you have access to Internet e-mail and are not receiving our legislative alerts, send your e-mail address to BoyceH1021@aol.com. We will add you to our system.

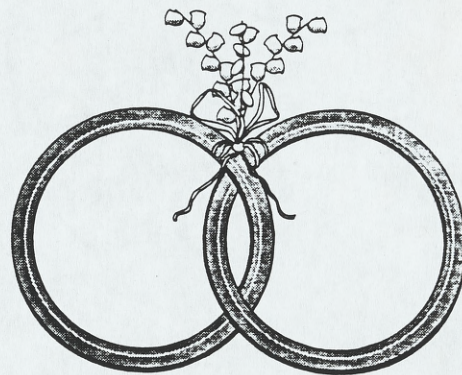


Preparing for the Marriage Issue

Continued from page 8

signatures. We will use that information to determine which Senator and Assemblymember represents them. Then we will add their legislator's names to the greeting at the top of the cards.

Please keep additional copies on hand and gather more signatures if you can and send them to us each month as you gather them. We will stockpile the signed cards and then hopefully bury the Legislature with mail if any attempt is made to block the recognition of same-sex marriages performed in Hawaii. Let's be prepared this time and bury the opposition!



Couples, Families, Individuals



Ellie Zacks, Ph.D.

Clinical Psychologist
PSY10426

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We at Lambda Letters have found the first 100,000 letters a wonderful adventure. We look forward to the next 100,000 and to shaping a better world in which all individuals are treasured and respected.

Thank you for being there with us!

Thank You!



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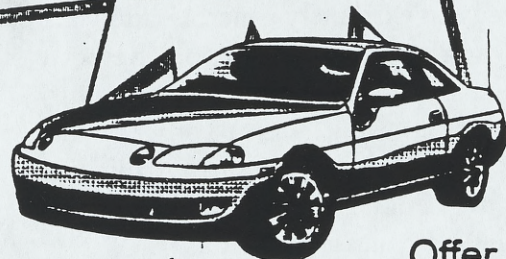
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